



DOWNTOWN RIFLE: WEST END URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

This Urban Renewal Plan has been prepared pursuant to the Urban Renewal Law of the State of Colorado for the Urban Renewal Area defined herein as “Downtown Rifle: West End” in Rifle, Colorado. As per the Urban Renewal Law, the purpose of this Plan is to provide a workable program for eliminating and preventing the spread of slum and blighted conditions within the area by utilizing public and private resources to encourage needed urban rehabilitation and redevelopment.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2006, the City of Rifle, Colorado undertook a blight study and conditions survey in the West End of the Downtown to determine if the area qualified as an Urban Renewal Area as defined in state statutes. Because the conditions appeared to meet the qualifications (as detailed in the *Downtown Rifle: West End Existing Conditions Survey*), the City then immediately undertook the preparation of this Plan.

Development in the West End has lagged that of the rest of the Downtown, which will only be exacerbated further with the planned relocation of Valley Lumber out of the area in spring of 2007. If the area is deemed an Urban Renewal Area, the City Council’s adoption of this Plan will provide the Rifle Urban Renewal Authority with several redevelopment tools, including the use of Tax Increment Financing revenues, with which to eliminate and prevent the spread of blight, promote the voluntary rehabilitation of existing buildings and properties, attract private investment and renewal projects, and promote sound economic development for the area and community at-large.

B. DESCRIPTION OF URBAN RENEWAL AREA

The “Downtown Rifle: West End” boundaries covered by this Plan (the “Area”) are roughly the Colorado Mountain College and Rifle Middle School campus to the north, the Colorado River to the south, Rifle Creek to the west, and Railroad Avenue to the east (see Figure 1). The Area comprises approximately 128 parcels totaling 89.81 acres and is located entirely within and surrounded by the City of Rifle corporate limits in Garfield County, Colorado. As indicated on the map, the Area includes public rights-of-way that adjoin and proximate to the parcels. A complete legal description of the Area is provided in Appendix A of this Plan.

The principal authors of this Plan include City planning and economic staff, Vandewalle & Associates, and Leavenworth & Karp. The Rifle City Council will simultaneously consider for adoption both this Plan and the *Downtown Rifle: West End Existing Conditions Survey*. Accordingly, this Plan is contingent upon the Council’s adoption of that survey and their finding that blight and slum conditions exist within the Area as required under the state Urban Renewal Law. Once adopted, this Plan will be administered by the City’s Urban Renewal Authority (the “Authority”).

C. URBAN RENEWAL AREA DEFINITIONS

As contained in CRS §31-25-103 of the Urban Renewal Law, the terms used in this Plan are defined as follows:

“Urban renewal area” means a slum area, or blighted area, or a combination thereof which the local governing body designates as appropriate for an urban renewal project.

“Urban renewal plan” means a plan, as it exists from time to time, for an urban renewal project, which plan conforms to a general or master plan for the physical development of the municipality as a whole and which is sufficiently complete to indicate such land acquisition, demolition and removal of structures, redevelopment, improvements, and rehabilitation as may be proposed to be carried out in the urban renewal area, zoning and planning changes, if any, land uses, maximum densities, building requirements, and the plan’s relationship to definite local objectives respecting appropriate land uses, improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, and other public improvements.

“Urban renewal project” means undertakings and activities in an urban renewal area for the elimination and for the prevention of the development or spread of slums and blight and may involve slum clearance and redevelopment, or rehabilitation, or conservation, or any combination or part thereof, in accordance with an urban renewal plan. Such undertakings and activities may include:

- (a) Acquisition of a slum area or blighted area or portion thereof;*
- (b) Demolition and removal of buildings and improvements;*
- (c) Installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements necessary for carrying out the objectives of the Urban Renewal Law in accordance with the urban renewal plan;*
- (d) Disposition of property acquired or held by the authority as part of its undertakings of the urban renewal project for the urban renewal area (including sale, initial leasing, or temporary retention by the authority itself) at the fair value of such property for uses in accordance with the urban renewal plan;*
- (e) Carrying out plans for a program through voluntary action and the regulatory process for the repair, alteration, and rehabilitation of buildings or other improvements in accordance with the urban renewal plan; and*
- (f) Acquisition of any other property where necessary to eliminate unhealthful, unsanitary, or unsafe conditions, lessen density, eliminate obsolete or other uses detrimental to the public welfare, or otherwise remove or prevent the spread of blight or deterioration or to provide land for needed public facilities.*

II. QUALIFYING CONDITIONS

A. EXISTING CONDITIONS SURVEY

The *Downtown Rifle: West End Existing Conditions Survey*, dated December 8, 2006 (the “Conditions Survey”), documents the presence of blight and slum conditions within the Area as defined by the Colorado Urban Renewal Law. The Conditions Survey was completed by City planning and economic staff, Vandewalle & Associates, and Leavenworth & Karp and is being considered for adoption by the City Council simultaneously with their consideration with this Plan. The Conditions Survey is hereby incorporated by reference into this document as if fully set forth herein with an understanding that the findings of the authors of the Conditions Survey serve only as recommendations to the Rifle City Council who shall determine whether the Area meets the statutory definition of a “blighted area” and decide whether to designate it as an Urban Renewal Area.

B. BLIGHTED AREA DEFINITION

The definition of “blighted area” used in the Conditions Survey is the same as that included in CRS §31-25-103 of the Urban Renewal Law:

“Blighted area” means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of at least four of the following factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare:

- (a) Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures;*
- (b) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;*
- (c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;*
- (d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;*
- (e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;*
- (f) Unusual topography;*
- (g) Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title non-marketable;*
- (h) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire and other causes;*
- (i) Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidations, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities;*

- (j) *Environmental contamination of buildings or property;*
- (k) *Inadequate public improvements or utilities; or*

If there is no objection of such property owner or owners and the tenant or tenants of such owner or owners, if any, to the inclusion of such property in an urban renewal area, “blighted area” also means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of any one of the factors specified in paragraphs (a) to (k) (above), substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare. For purposes of this paragraph, the fact that an owner of an interest in such property does not object to the inclusion of such property in the urban renewal area does not mean that the owner has waived any rights of such owner in connection with laws governing condemnation.

C. CONDITIONS SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND CONCLUSION

The *Downtown Rifle: West End Existing Conditions Survey* includes a detailed analysis of site, building, and public improvement conditions. These conditions were identified and analyzed on a parcel-by-parcel basis to produce maps showing the presence of qualifying blight conditions present in the Area.

City of Rifle staff and personnel from Vandewalle & Associates conducted field investigations to document physical conditions within the categories of blight set out in the state statute. Pertinent Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data also was analyzed by City staff and Vandewalle & Associates. Additional supplemental and updated information was obtained through meetings and interviews with City officials, the Rifle Police Department, Fire Department, and the 911 Call Center, as well as other experts on local and regional market conditions.

Based on the observed conditions within the Area, interviews, and documents described in the Conditions Survey, the conclusion of the Conditions Survey is the Area, either wholly or in part, is appropriate to be defined as a “blighted area” and qualified for designation of an Urban Renewal Area. Such designation requires the preparation and adoption of an Urban Renewal Plan, consistent with the Urban Renewal Law, to eliminate and prevent the spread of blight, attract private investment, and promote sound economic development for the area and community at-large. The Conditions Survey found that nine (9) statutory “blighting factors” were present in the Area, thereby permitting the Authority to acquire land through the use of eminent domain consistent with this Plan and the Urban Renewal Law.

III. PLAN OBJECTIVES AND LAND USES

A. EXISTING LAND USES & INFRASTRUCTURE

The parcels and rights-of-way within the Area comprise a total of 89.81 acres. The Area has a variety of land uses, but primary consists of commercial uses on the south end and a mix of commercial and residential uses located on the north (see Figure 2).

In addition to the private properties, the Area also contains extensive public rights-of-way that traverse and extend into and out of it (see Figure 1). These include streets and alleys (and the utilities within them), which have widely varying levels of improvements (paving, curbs and gutters, sidewalks) as detailed in the Conditions Survey. Many of these rights-of-way will need extensive improvements to attract and support redevelopment of the parcels. Because such improvements are typically constructed block-by-block, the rights-of-way have been included in block-long segments (as opposed to the parcels, which do not always include every property on a particular block).

B. PROPOSED LAND USES

The Future Land Uses shown on Figure 3 are an extension from the City of Rifle's adopted Comprehensive Plan (see Section VI of this Plan) and are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan update currently in progress. As shown, proposed land uses primarily consist of three new designations within the Urban Renewal Area- Central Business District, Mixed Use Commercial and Mixed Use Residential. In general, it is directed that larger scale projects within these districts will be subject to the City of Rifle's Planned Unit Development review process:

- Central Business District (CBD)- pedestrian oriented indoor commercial, office institutional and residential uses with streetscape, low-key signage and buildings built to the sidewalk typically associated with downtowns. New development and redevelopment shall use materials and design that embraces the tones established by iconic structures found in the Central Business District (Midland Building, Rifle Mercantile, McLauren Building).
- Mixed Use Residential (MUR)- a variety of residential, office, and neighborhood supporting institutional and commercial uses which preserve the residential character through building scale, build appearance, landscaping and signage but support one or more of the following uses:
 - Two family/townhome/ rowhouse residential
 - Mixed residential
 - Neighborhood office
 - Neighborhood commercial
 - Institutional

- Mixed Use Commercial (MUC)- carefully controlled mix of institutional, commercial, office, residential and transit uses based on high quality detailed plans.

These proposed land uses are consistent with Redevelopment Area Concept Plans for the Valley Lumber site and adjoining properties. Although not an officially adopted plan of the City, the Redevelopment Area Concept Plans depict the City's desired reuse plan for the Valley Lumber area. In an attempt to provide a catalytic redevelopment project for the Area, the City had entered into an agreement to acquire the site and relocate Valley Lumber to a more suitable location within the community. In general, the Valley Lumber Redevelopment Area Concept Plans call for the entire land area bound by West Avenue, 1st Street, Rifle Creek and 3rd Street to be developed and redeveloped to be extensions of the existing downtown core of Rifle. In particular, Park Avenue that currently ends at 3rd Street to the north of Rifle Creek will bridge the creek and connect directly to 1st Street. This new connection will create a four-way, signalized intersection at Park and 1st, allowing for retail and mixed use commercial to locate in the area. In addition, the Valley Lumber site will become a high density, mixed use town center with an emphasis on entertainment, dining and retail options. Retail and commercial on the lower floors of the buildings within the block will be complemented with additional office and residential "lofts" in the upper stories. Being that the site will be within the Rifle downtown and will strive to be both functional and walkable, parking will be minimized and a central parking facility will be more advantageous than individual parking areas for separate buildings.

The concepts created for the Valley Lumber Redevelopment Area are expected to drive the City's solicitation of redevelopment proposals for the Valley Lumber site and its negotiations with one or more selected developers, but the plan also is intended to be flexible as necessary to account for changing market conditions and the community's ability to attract the desired uses. Accordingly, it is expected that the concepts and ideas presented in the Valley Lumber Redevelopment Area Concepts Plan will be given a high level of consideration by the Authority and the City Council as they pursue the advancement of this and other specific redevelopment proposals for the Valley Lumber area.

C. PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND FACILITIES

Infrastructure conditions within the Area vary greatly (as documented in the Conditions Survey) and will need to be improved to attract and support private redevelopment. Consistent with the Urban Renewal Law, the Authority may undertake, or cause others to undertake, a wide range of public improvements in the Area, including, but not limited to: streets, sidewalks, trails, utilities, service facilities, streetscape, parking facilities, and any other authorized improvements necessary for the purpose of achieving the Objectives of this Plan.

Funding for the right-of-way and infrastructure improvements could be provided partially by tax increment revenues (see Section V of this Plan) and/or City capital improvement funds. Accordingly, the location and extent of improvements will need to be determined as specific renewal projects are identified and specific costs and revenues determined.

Likewise, some rights-of-way may need to be vacated and the utilities within them relocated as necessary to provide adequate sites for renewal projects.

D. REDEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Consistent with the proposed land uses shown on Figure 3 and the recommendations of the Valley Lumber Redevelopment Area Concepts Plan, the redevelopment objectives for the Area include establishment of a variety of land uses and densities/intensities as necessary to attract private investment and to eliminate and prevent the spread of blight. General objectives to be achieved in the implementation of this Plan include the following (the “Plan Objectives”):

- Eliminating and preventing blight and other conditions that deter development;
- Creating an environment that encourages the retention and expansion of existing businesses in the Area and the community;
- Encouraging voluntary reinvestment in and rehabilitation of existing properties by existing owners and tenants;
- Creating an environment that encourages private developers and investors to carry out renewal projects;
- Implementing of the goals, objectives and recommendations of the adopted Comprehensive Plan;
- Improving coordination and compatibility between land uses within the Area;
- Improving coordination and compatibility of land uses and development in the Area with rest of the Downtown and adjoining neighborhoods;
- Increasing property values within and adjacent to the Area;
- Increasing retail sales in the Area and the community;
- Improving circulation and access for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians;
- Improving parking and loading areas;
- Coordinating private development with public improvements;
- Maximizing the benefits of public investments and improvements;
- Recognizing the contributions of affected taxing jurisdictions and responsibly using those contributions to achieve the greatest long-term benefits to each district;
- Enhancing coordination with the Rifle Downtown Development Authority and its plans and efforts to improve the properties within its jurisdiction;
- Improving coordination between local, state and federal agencies involved in redevelopment and leveraging the resources each has to offer to achieve even greater returns;
- Maximizing the benefits and tools provided by the Colorado Urban Renewal Law while ensuring full compliance with all of the law’s requirements;

- Implementing a proactive approach to Plan implementation by looking for and seizing opportunities to eliminate blight and responsibly using the powers of the Urban Renewal Authority to acquire land, demolish buildings and clear sites, assist with relocation and provide relocation benefits, and pursue renewal and improvement projects.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

The Colorado Urban Renewal Law provides for a wide range of implementation activities to eliminate and prevent the spread of blight and to encourage private investment and development. Accordingly, the Authority may undertake any or all of the following, as authorized by the state law, as necessary to achieve the Plan Objectives.

A. Developer Agreements

The Authority may enter into Developer Agreements or other contracts with developer(s), property owners or other parties as the Authority deems necessary or desirable to achieve the Plan Objectives. Such agreements may include terms and provisions for project planning and design, public improvements, financing, and other provisions as permitted by the Urban Renewal Law and as the Authority may deem necessary for implementing this Plan.

B. Public Improvements

The Authority may undertake, or cause to be undertaken, the design, construction, installation, replacement, improvement, expansion or relocation of public improvements within the Area as necessary to achieve the Plan Objectives. The Authority may fund such improvements, in total or in part, and may enter into agreements with the City of Rifle and/or other utility, infrastructure and service providers, or private parties, to fund, design and/or construct the improvements.

C. Property Acquisition and Disposition.

As necessary to achieve the Plan Objectives, the Authority may acquire a full or partial interest in real property through any legal means available to it, including the use of eminent domain. The use of eminent domain shall be in full accordance with the Colorado Urban Renewal Law and this Plan, and shall be exercised only with approval of the Rifle City Council. Once acquired, any such property shall be under the control and management of the Authority and may be temporarily held and managed by the Authority prior to its final disposition. In disposing of a property, the Authority may rent, lease, sell or otherwise transfer its interest in the property to another entity or person subject to the provisions of the Urban Renewal Law and other any terms and conditions the Authority may deem necessary to eliminate or prevent the spread of blight and/or to further a renewal project.

D. Relocation Assistance

It is not expected that the implementation activities of the Authority will result in the displacement of individuals, families or businesses. However, if such relocation becomes necessary as a result of the Authority's acquisition of property, the Authority shall develop and adopt a program to assist the affected party or parties find another suitable location and to provide other relocation benefits as required under the Urban Renewal

Law. No such displacement shall occur without the Authority first adopting such a relocation program, which program shall become a part of this Plan upon its adoption.

E. Demolition and Site Clearance

The Authority may, as it deems necessary to achieve the Plan Objectives, undertake, or cause to be undertaken, the demolition and clearance of buildings, structures or other site improvements as necessary to eliminate or prevent the spread of blight and/or to further a renewal project. Such demolition and clearance on property not owned by the Authority shall be undertaken only with the consent of the property owner or with the consent and authorization of a court of competent jurisdiction.

F. Other Redevelopment Activities

As necessary to achieve the Plan Objectives, the Authority may engage in all other activities permitted under the Urban Renewal Law to eliminate or prevent the spread of blight and/or to further a renewal project. Such activities include, but are not limited to: the elimination of unhealthy, unsanitary or unsafe conditions; the investigation of, remedial planning for, and remediation of environmental contamination of buildings or property; the elimination of buildings, structures or uses that substantially impair sound growth of the Area and City; and the improvement of, or provision of land for, needed public improvements and facilities.

V. PROJECT FINANCING

As indicated in the Conditions Survey, a substantial portion of the Area presents unique challenges to existing property owners and potential developers. Further, the achievement of the Plan Objectives will require the Authority to play a strategic role in eliminating blight and attracting developers through the provision of public improvements and the acquisition and clearance of redevelopment sites. Accordingly, the Authority may finance renewal projects, in whole or in part, under the tax increment financing (TIF) provisions of CRS § 31-25-107(9)(a) of the Urban Renewal Law, or by any other available source of financing authorized to be undertaken by the Authority pursuant to CRS § 31-25-105 of the Urban Renewal Law.

Specifically, the Authority is authorized to: (a) finance urban renewal projects within the Area with revenues from property tax increments, sales tax increments, interest income, federal loans or grants, agreements with public, quasi-public or private parties and entities, loans or advances from any other available source, and any other available sources of revenue; (b) issue bonds and incur other obligations contemplated by the Urban Renewal Law in an amount sufficient to finance all or any part of a project within the Area; and (c) borrow funds and create indebtedness in any authorized form in carrying out this Plan. Any principal and interest on such indebtedness may be paid from property tax increments, sales tax increments or any other funds, revenues, assets or properties legally available to the Authority. Such methods may be combined to finance all or part of the Plan activities.

A. PROPERTY TAX INCREMENT

Property tax increment funds are expected to provide the primary source of revenues for the activities of the Authority. In accordance with the property tax allocation financing provisions of the Urban Renewal Law, a fund for financing projects may be accrued and used by the Authority. Under this method, property taxes levied after the effective date of the approval of this Plan upon taxable property in the Area each year by or for the benefit of any public body shall be divided for a period not to exceed twenty-five (25) years after the effective date of the adoption of the tax allocation provision, as follows:

- 1. Base Amount** – That portion of the taxes which are produced by the levy at the rate fixed each year by, or for, each such public body upon the valuation for assessment of taxable property in the Area last certified, prior to the effective date of approval of this Plan or, as to an area later added to this Area, the effective date of the modification of the Plan, shall be paid into the funds of each such public body as are all other taxes collected by or for said public body.
- 2. Increment Amount** – That portion of said property taxes in excess of such base amount shall be allocated to and, when collected, paid into a special fund of the Authority to pay the principal of, the interest on, and any premiums due in connection with the bonds of, loans or advances to or indebtedness incurred by (whether funded, refunded, assumed or otherwise) the Authority for financing or refinancing, in whole

or in part, an urban renewal project within the Area. Such increment shall also be used to pay for the Authority's financial obligations incurred in the implementation of this Plan.

Unless and until the total valuation for assessment of the taxable property in the Area exceeds the base valuation for assessment of the taxable property in the Area, all of the taxes levied upon taxable property in the Area shall be paid in to the funds of the respective public bodies.

In the event that there is a general reassessment of taxable property valuations in Garfield County, which are subject to division of valuation for assessment between the base and increment amounts, as provided above, the portions of valuations for assessment to be allocated as provided above shall be proportionately adjusted in accordance with such reassessment. Note that at the time of this Plan adoption, such a general reassessment occurs every two years, in the odd-numbered years.

B. SALES TAX INCREMENT

The Authority shall finance implementation activities under the sales tax allocation financing provisions of the Urban Renewal Law. Under these provisions, sales tax revenues generated within the Area that flow to the City are "frozen" at their current level (based on the previous twelve months prior to the adoption of this Plan) less special purpose sales tax allocations that were established prior to the adoption of this Plan. Thereafter, the City continues to receive this fixed amount with all new (incremental) sales tax revenues generated within the Area flowing to the Authority excluding current sales tax collected for special purposes: ½ cent street improvement and 1 cent parks and recreation. Final authorization of the Authority's receipt and use of sales tax increment shall be by separate action of the Rifle City Council.

C. TAX INCREMENT REIMBURSEMENT

Tax increment revenues may be used to reimburse the City and/or a developer for costs incurred for improvements related to a project to pay the debt incurred by the Authority with such entities for urban renewal activities and purposes. Tax increment revenues also may be irrevocably pledged to the Authority for the payment of the principal of, the interest on, and any premiums due in connection with such bonds, loans, advances, and indebtedness related to urban renewal activities under this Plan.

VI. CONFORMITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of Rifle adopted a Comprehensive Plan Update in 1998. Within the Plan are Goal statements for several aspects of the growth, development and quality of life of the community, each of which then includes a list of Policies and Actions for achieving the goal. A Future Land Use Plan has been developed as a part of the West End Urban Renewal Plan for the Urban Renewal Area and is available in Figure 3 of this Document. The text descriptions of the land use areas designations are described in Section III-B. The overall intent of these new land area designations is to further the primary Goals, Policies and Actions related to the West End of Downtown:

COMMUNITY CHARACTER/GROWTH PATTERN GOALS

- Create a concentrated land use pattern by encouraging growth within and adjacent to the existing City limits.
- Encourage build-out of existing developments with growth as infill and redevelopment within the existing City limits.
- Encourage compatible mixed use developments which reflect the qualities of site planning and land use patterns of the historic sections of the City.
- Enhance the visual and aesthetic quality throughout the community.

Future Land Use Policies and Actions

- Urge developers to build structures which convey a sense of the local character. Stereotypical box-style, “anywhere America” construction should be discouraged. If large scale commercial and industrial buildings are needed, they should be sited and designed so they do not dominate the landscape and detract from the small-town character of Rifle. The building sites should be well landscaped, provide pedestrian and bicycle paths, have simple non-intrusive signage, and contain architectural elements which help integrate them into the surrounding landscape. Design guidelines and standards that encourage well-integrated architectural elements should be generated to help developers understand the context and character the City wishes to promote.
- Consider site improvements as a critical component of any development. Landscaping, lighting, fencing, and additional amenities should reflect the character of the area and be included as part of the development process.
- Extend the historic grid pattern of transportation routes. To the maximum extent possible, proposed development should integrate the existing grid as well as historic building setbacks and sidewalk locations that contribute to a sense of continuity with existing patterns. The need for flexibility should be recognized since topography, land configuration, and other conditions will play an important role in the most appropriate site design.

- Implement a citywide free planting and maintenance program. Achieve “Tree City” designation. The program should include people of all ages and from all section of the community. The City has recently adopted a tree ordinance.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Expand and strengthen the economic base; diversify the economy and enhance the economic viability of the downtown.
- Strengthen the viability of the downtown with new commercial anchors that enhance the functioning of the downtown district.

Future Land Use Policies and Actions

- Organize a concerted effort to diversify and broaden the City’s economy. Involve a broad range of interested individuals and entities such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rifle Area Industrial Development (RAID), Downtown Development Authority, the City, the County, and other similar organizations.
- Concentrate on developing an economic base for the community which broadens and improves long term employment opportunities, is compatible with environmental resources of the City, and provides a range of job opportunities rather than depending upon one large scale business industry.
- Retain and enhance the historic qualities of the downtown which contribute to the unique and novel character of the district.
- Protect the more desirable and highly visible parcels along 1-70 and Highway 6/24 primarily for commercial and industrial development.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS GOALS

- Create parks, open space and trail system throughout the City that links neighborhoods and activity areas, and provides facilities and programs for all ages.
- New development should orient itself towards and/or compliment Centennial Park. Centennial Park will be a focal point of the Urban Renewal Area and should be linked as much as possible to downtown revitalization.

Future Land Use Policies and Actions

- Provide a linked open space and trail system throughout the City which connects neighborhoods to major use areas throughout the City. Continue to implement the approved Rifle Trail System Planning Program. As part of the overall trail system, create an open space trail which links the South Rifle area and the Rifle Visitor Center/Colorado River, Rifle Creek, downtown and throughout the City. Trails should be separated from roads, wherever possible.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

- Provide a safe, attractive, and efficient transportation network for automobile, bike, pedestrian and transit users.
- Encourage an interconnected transportation pattern throughout the City.
- Enhance transportation gateways and transition Hwy 13 from Whiteriver Ave to Rifle Creek into an urban street corridor with quality streetscape and pedestrian connectivity from north to south.

Future Land Use Policies and Actions

- Implement the City of Rifle Transportation Plan (October 11, 1994). In addition, work with developers to ensure that an interconnected road pattern (rather than purely hierarchical pattern) is developed. The historic grid pattern should be considered in areas with adequate space and gentle slopes.

CHARACTER DISTRICT POLICIES AND ACTIONS

The downtown is one of eight “Character Districts” identified within the adopted Comprehensive Plan, with each having specific Goals, Policies and Actions. The importance of the downtown and its future development/redevelopment is made clear in the Plan, including this statement:

“Historically the downtown was the heart of the community as the center of government, civic services, business, entertainment and residential life. This central business district (CBD) still provides Rifle with a traditional western town image which residents and visitors appreciate. However, more contemporary commercial and residential development along the City’s edges compete with downtown enterprise. If the historic core is going to remain economically viable and important within the community, a more defined focus for the CBD must be sought.”

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MIXED USE AREA GOAL

- Retain the downtown as the central business district, banking, service, and entertainment area for the City while sustaining and enhancing the district’s distinctive historic appeal.

Future Land Use Policies and Actions

- Promote development at the southwest corner of Highway 13 and US Highway 6/24 which serves as an anchor for the downtown and Highway 6/24. Uses should draw people from I-70 as well as serve City residents. Unique and quality restaurants, specialty shops, bed and breakfast or other distinctive uses should be considered.
- Focus on keeping the historic downtown a strong, viable city center by enhancing and expanding the mix of uses and aiding in rehabilitation of blighted areas and structures. Identify this area as a vital mixed use center for commercial (specialty), civic, banking, and entertainment. Encourage development which reinforces the historic character and mix in the area and acts to focus employment, residents, civic

activity and special events to the heart of the City. Encourage and attract an increasing number of restaurants, specialty shops, entertainment, lodging, and tourist activities. Direct more public service facilities, such as county or community services, to locate in the downtown.

- Adjust the current zoning regulations and processes to encourage infill retail development, housing above first floor commercial space and bed and breakfast lodging. Home-located commercial enterprises and “cottage industry” should especially be encouraged in areas directly adjacent to the commercial downtown.
- Expand the size of downtown beyond existing commercial core to encompass a 20-block area. Locations to consider include: East First, lower end of East Avenue, West Fourth, West Avenue (Fourth Street to Railroad Avenue), and the west side of Railroad Avenue to Sixth Street.
- Ensure that commercial enterprises assist in developing solutions to the parking problems.
- Expand and improve the urban parks, plazas, and streetscaping in the downtown. Increase the landscaping and pedestrian improvements along Railroad Avenue, First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Streets.
- Continue to work with the Downtown Development Authority and the Chamber of Commerce to promote activities and programs which generate increased business and recognition of the downtown.
- Create incentives for redevelopment and assist business owners with the grant applications and funding to upgrade private buildings and the public streetscape.
- Create a quality signage program that guides people easily to downtown, commercial and parking areas. This signage program should begin near I-70 interchange and at the north entry to the City.
- Create pedestrian/bike trails which provide convenient connections to the downtown from all other areas of the City.
- Consider the downtown as a temporary location for a simple recreation/youth center which utilizes available space in an existing downtown structure. Consider utilizing funds from sales taxes to start the recreation center.
- Ensure building and site development in this area reflects historic building heights, setbacks, materials, and orientation which enhance the City’s western character.

VII. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND PROCESSES

All development within the Area shall conform to the City of Rifle Zoning Code, Building Code, Fire Code, and all other applicable development codes, policies and procedures. In accordance with the Urban Renewal Law and this Plan, the Authority may adopt additional design standards and other requirements applicable to properties and projects in the Area.

In general, the purpose of this Plan is to see redevelopment occur in a manner that connects with Rifle's historic roots through architecture and site design. New development and redevelopment in this Area shall use materials and design that embraces the tones established by iconic structures found in the Central Business District (Midland Building, Rifle Mercantile, Mclearen Building).

VIII. PLAN ADMINISTRATION

A. PLAN MODIFICATIONS

This Plan may be modified pursuant to the requirements and procedures set forth in CRS §31-25-107 of the Urban Renewal Law.

B. PLAN VARIATIONS

In cases where a literal enforcement of the provisions contained in this Plan would constitute an unreasonable limitation beyond the Plan's intents and purposes, the Authority may allow reasonable variations from such provisions, provided such variations are authorized under the Urban Renewal Law.

C. SEVERABILITY

If any section or portion of this Plan is for any reason held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the remaining portion of this Plan.

D. TERM

The term of this Plan, and the use of Tax Increment Financing, shall be twenty-five (25) years from its effective date, unless the Authority deems that all projects have been accomplished and all debts incurred to finance those projects and all expenses of the Authority have been repaid. In such case, the Authority may declare the Plan to be fully implemented and the total of all taxes upon the taxable property and sales in the Area shall be paid into the funds of the respective public bodies.

FIGURES
